19th February 2016

To,

His Holiness Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin,

Re: Eliminating Khatna amongst girls in the Bohra community.

We have been subject to and/or have had loved ones subjected to khatna at the fragile age of 7. The physical and psychological effects of this are still with us. We have experienced severe pain and excessive bleeding in some cases, shock, difficulty in passing urine, infections, injury to nearby genital tissue due to the procedure done on us.

The pain inflicted by female circumcision/khatna did not stop with the initial procedure, but continued throughout our life. Because as children the shock and trauma of being subject to mutilation of an extremely sensitive genital part, without being told, the subsequent pain and shame associated with it, combined with secrecy has left indelible scars on our psyche. We have all experienced various long-term effects - physical, sexual and psychological.

For most us talking about this itself has been a huge step as we have never disclosed to any of our near and dear ones the aftermath of this procedure and the effects it has had on us throughout our lives. Today some of us have taken courage to address you and appeal to you to eliminate and eradicate this practice in our community. We request you to take cognizance of our voices and pay heed to traumatic experiences. We want you to specially consider the harmful effects it has on the girl child and the severe abuse of child rights which takes place because of this procedure being perpetrated on young innocent girls aged 6-7.

As our Dai you have the best interests of all your followers at heart. We feel it necessary to share with you all our traumatic experiences and after effects of this procedure.

We also extend our heartiest gratitude to you for issuing decrees in Australia and UK asking the Bohras residing there to abstain from female circumcision as it is against the laws of that land. This is indeed a very positive and far sighted move for as it is said in the decree we Bohras believe in Hubbul Watan Minal Iman as per the prophet Mohammed Rasullah’s hadith.

We urge you to issue such decrees for all other countries worldwide that have anti FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) laws as Hubbul Watan Minal Iman calls for an end to khatna there as well. India, where the largest numbers of Bohras reside, is a part of the United Nations which categorically and clearly denounces FGM. India is also a signatory to the CEDAW and hence we need a clear directive in India as well.

Given that the Bohra community is one community spread across the whole world, one directive from your Holiness would bring the community together as one.

We, the undersigned Dawoodi Bohra women request you to pay heed to our pleas by banning the practice of FGM/female circumcision among all Bohras residing in any part of the world.

Salaam,
Respectfully yours,
Signed

speakoutonfgm@gmail.com